

seven astronauts whose lives were lost aboard the space shuttle *Columbia* were extraordinary people. To the world those astronauts were valiant heroes; to us in Texas they were also friends, neighbors, and family. They made the ultimate sacrifice on a mission that benefited all of humanity. They deserve the highest level of honor, and their sacrifice and dedication must be commemorated in a way that will serve to inspire the next generation of explorers.

Those that we remember today are:

- (1) Rick D. Husband;
- (2) Michael P. Anderson;
- (3) Laurel Clark;
- (4) David M. Brown;
- (5) William C. McCool;
- (6) Kapana Chawla; and
- (7) Ilan Ramon.

These astronauts were individuals of the highest caliber, always striving for excellence, and exemplifying the most noble of human traits. They were skilled professionals, scientists, clinicians, adventurers, and family men and women. The crew represented the diversity of our Nation—black and white, men and women, immigrant and native-born, and included a comrade from Israel embodying the international goals of peace and cooperation.

The *Columbia* crew was deeply committed to the NASA mission. NASA provides insights into the origins, destiny, and wonder of the universe and is a source of dreams for young and old alike. These seven courageous explorers paid the ultimate price to improve our understanding of the universe, to advance our medical and engineering sciences, and to make the Nation safer and more secure. Before the *Columbia* started its tragic descent, the shuttle crew completed some 80 scientific experiments. Much of their research data had already been relayed to Houston where it has added to the pool of scientific knowledge.

In the 108th Congress, I introduce legislation (H.R. 525) that would have authorized the issuance of Congressional Gold Medals to commemorate our fallen heroes on the Space Shuttle *Columbia*. Three hundred eighteen of my colleagues in the House of Representatives joined me in the co-sponsorship of that legislation. Nevertheless, the bill never made it to a vote.

I have reintroduced the bill in the 109th Congress (H.R. 258) authorizing the coinage of a Gold Medal to pay proper tribute to our astronauts. Unfortunately, untimely and ill conceived legislation (H.R. 54) also before the 109th Congress which purports to “provide reasonable standards for congressional gold medals” essentially limits the bestowal of this honor to American icons. One of the main reasons that the medal is bestowed is to make the highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions. H.R. 54 will summarily restrict this goal and prevent many honored heroes from receiving proper recognition. Provisions in H.R. 54 will specifically exclude the award of Congressional Gold Medals to the *Columbia* astronauts.

I hope that my colleagues in this esteemed body will join me in helping to pass legislation that will properly honor our *Columbia* heroes. I also ask my colleagues to help ensure that those deserving can be recognized by Congress through the issuance of Gold Medals.

The tragedy that occurred two years ago serves as a wake-up call for a new look at spacecraft safety. NASA has made good progress identifying the causes of the *Columbia* crash and is designing approaches for the Shuttles’ return to flight. I have called for detailed safety analyses of the International Space Station (ISS) and hope that my colleagues will work with me in developing legislation that will authorize a safety audit of the ISS that will address the same level of detail addressed by the Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

#### GREENSBORO FOUR INSPIRED NONVIOLENT PROTESTS AGAINST RACIAL SEGREGATION ACROSS THE SOUTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to join the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) in rising tonight to remember an act of courage and conscience 45 years ago today that forever changed North Carolina, the South, and our Nation.

On February 1, 1960, four African American students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, North Carolina A&T, walked into the F. W. Woolworth store in downtown Greensboro and sat down at the “whites’ only” lunch counter. They were refused service, but they continued to sit at the lunch counter in non-violent protest.

The courageous nonviolent protests of the four A&T freshmen, Jibrel Khazan, then Ezell Blair, Jr.; David Richmond; Joseph McNeil; and Franklin McCain, the Greensboro Four, inspired sit-ins across North Carolina and the South to protest racial segregation in public accommodations and in every other area of life.

□ 2000

The sit-in movement became a critical part of the civil rights movements and led eventually to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the integration of public accommodations in America.

Today, I attended a celebration in Greensboro marking the 45th anniversary of the beginning of the sit-in movement. In July, the Woolworth’s store in downtown Greensboro, hallowed ground to the civil rights movement, will open as an international civil rights museum.

Mr. Speaker, we no longer have whites-only lunch counters. Ending segregation has made our Nation a more decent and just society, but there remains much work to be done to achieve racial justice. There remain disparities in almost every aspect of life. And the courage and conscience of the Greensboro Four remains an inspiration for all Americans to recognize

injustice, to refuse to accept injustice, to act against injustice.

#### HONORING LANCE CORPORAL ADOLFO LOPEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PRICE of Georgia). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of United States Marine Lance Corporal Adolfo Lopez.

On Thursday, November 18, 2004, Lance Corporal Lopez, a member of Battery T Unit, 5th Battalion, 11th Marines, 1st Marine Division, died at the young age of 19.

Mr. Lopez was killed in tragic rollover accident near Tucson, Arizona, while traveling home to Laredo, Texas, from a California military base.

Mr. Lopez, also known as Buffy, was coming home to Laredo to spend the holidays with his family before being deployed to Iraq. Although he did not make it to the battlefield, Adolfo was proud to be called a Marine.

Mr. Lopez, a 2003 graduate of J.B. Alexander High School, was described by his high school senior counselor as dedicated, disciplined and goal oriented. She said one of Adolfo’s greatest moments was when he was informed that he had been accepted to the United States Marines.

While in the United States Marines, Adolfo received the National Service Defense Medal. According to Jose Antonio Lopez, his brother’s goal was to become a Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps.

One of Adolfo’s high school teachers, Mrs. Cecilia Santos, recalls letters and e-mail Adolfo sent her from boot camp in which he would mention how hard it was being away from his home, his family and his friends. Nevertheless, the growth in character he was experiencing was evident in his letters. Mrs. Santos noted in a letter that Buffy was fast becoming a man, a man of great moral fiber who was a role model to our youth.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents in Laredo, Texas, I ask this great body to join me in sending our most heartfelt condolences to the family of Lance Corporal Adolfo Lopez.

May God watch over his parents, Daniel and Mercedes Lopez, and his brothers and sisters, Daniel, Jose, Herminia, Christian, David, Dennise, and Eddie Lopez.

#### OMNIBUS NONPROLIFERATION AND ANTI-NUCLEAR TERRORISM ACT OF 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, early on the morning of October 11, 2001, as lower Manhattan still lay smoldering, President Bush was told by George Tenet, the Director of Central Intelligence, that a CIA agent was reporting that al Qaeda terrorists armed with a stolen Russian nuclear weapon were loose in New York City.

The threat was not made public for fear it would cause mass panic, but it precipitated an evacuation of hundreds of senior U.S. Government officials, including Vice-President CHENEY, to a series of undisclosed locations away from the capital. Nuclear Emergency Search Teams were dispatched to New York to look for the weapon, reportedly a 10 kiloton warhead that could have killed at least 100,000 people if it were detonated in Manhattan.

Thankfully, the CIA report turned out to be untrue, but the danger we face from nuclear terrorism is all too real. Osama bin Laden has termed the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction "a religious duty," while his press spokesman has announced that al Qaeda aspires to kill 4 million Americans, including 1 million children.

President Bush has deemed a nuclear terrorist attack on the United States as the number one national security threat facing this country. Last week, in a valedictory interview with the Associated Press, Attorney General John Ashcroft also singled out the danger to America posed by terrorists armed with nuclear weapons.

I agree with the President and the Attorney General. I also share the conviction of almost every expert in and out of government who has looked at this problem that if we do not act now to secure existing nuclear material and weapons, as well as the expertise needed to build new weapons, a nuclear terrorist attack on the United States is only a matter of time.

Mr. Speaker, I will be introducing the Omnibus Nuclear Nonproliferation and Anti-Nuclear Terrorism Act of 2005 to better enable the United States to prevent what Graham Allison of Harvard University has termed "the ultimate preventable catastrophe." I am pleased to announce that several of my colleagues will be joining me as co-sponsors.

Over the past several months I have consulted with a range of experts to produce a range of policies that I believe will be effective and which can be implemented quickly, as time is of the essence and time is not on our side.

First, the bill creates an Office of Nonproliferation Programs within the Executive Office of the President to coordinate and oversee America's efforts to prevent terrorists from gaining access to nuclear weapons and to manage the effort to secure existing nuclear material in the former Soviet Union and other places.

The bill expands the ability of the President to carry out the Cooperative

Threat Reduction programs both in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere.

It will enhance the Global Threat Reduction Initiative announced by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham, our former Secretary, last May to advance the global cleanout of the most vulnerable stockpiles of nuclear weapons materials.

The legislation calls on the President to expand and strengthen his Proliferation Security Initiative to interdict the shipment of nuclear material.

My bill also urges the President to work with other nations and international organizations to develop and implement standards to improve the security of nuclear weapons and materials.

It authorizes the Department of Energy to assist Russia in conducting a comprehensive inventory of its tactical weapons and requires reports to Congress on those efforts.

My bill will also expand the President's authority to fund non-defense research by Russian WMD scientists so these scientists would not be tempted to sell their secrets to North Korea, Iran or al Qaeda.

Finally, the bill will require the President to report on ways to strengthen the Non-proliferation Treaty by more effectively controlling nuclear technology and material and by mobilizing the international community to close the loophole in Article IV of the treaty.

Mr. Speaker, as the Nation and this Congress grappled with the attacks of September 11, we asked ourselves how we could have failed to foresee the danger posed by al Qaeda and taken steps to prevent 9/11. We know about the danger of nuclear terrorism. We have been warned repeatedly. We are in a race with terrorists who are actively seeking nuclear weapons. The choice is ours. We can continue doing what we are doing now and risk an almost inevitable nuclear attack or we can take action to prevent it. When you consider the consequences, Mr. Speaker, the choice is really no choice at all.

#### DAMAGING SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) for helping to organize this Special Order with me.

I would like to thank and recognize my colleagues who have agreed to participate in this Democratic hour of discussion. Those who are here tonight to speak are from the Democratic Women's Caucus, from the Congressional

Black Caucus, from the Hispanic Caucus, and we have many other like-minded Members here tonight to speak.

Tomorrow night, we will listen to the President describe his domestic agenda for the next 4 years. He has already told us what he will spend most of his time talking about. He will not be talking about paying down the staggering national deficit or addressing the international crisis over the falling American dollar or getting Americans back to work after we have lost over 2 million jobs.

He will be talking about Social Security. He is going to spend his first annual address to the Nation trying to sell us on his plan to cut Social Security in half. Of course, that is not what he is going to call it, but that is exactly what it is.

I suggest that we listen carefully tomorrow night not to what the President says as much to what he does not say. In fact, the White House admitted today to the Washington Post that the President will not talk about the size of the benefit cuts his plan requires or about how the size of the proposed private accounts compare to the benefits retirees are now getting.

Let us see tomorrow night if the President tells the public that his plan will raise the deficit by over \$2 trillion or put in jeopardy the trust fund that guarantees retired American workers financial dignity in their old age.

Let us call it like it is. The President wants to privatize Social Security, although I am sure he will not use that word, because they know that Americans do not like gambling in the stock market with the Social Security Trust Fund. Democrats will make clear that his plan means putting at risk the Social Security Trust Fund that guarantees working Americans an old age with financial dignity.

The President wants to cut benefits drastically. He has to make his plan work, but he will not say that. Democrats will tell Americans the Bush plan means each of you will get less than you get now and less than you would get if you did nothing at all.

The President wants to increase the deficit by \$2 trillion to pay for his plan, additional debt that would most likely be held by a foreign country such as China or Japan, but he will not mention that his reckless deficit increase lets other nations control America's economy and perhaps even our future.

Democrats are standing up for our economic security and for that of our children. Enough American debt is already in the hands of other countries.

If that is not bad enough, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) wants to calculate monthly benefits based on race and gender. For example, women get less each month in his proposal than men because they tend to live longer.

Democrats are saying we will not accept a Social Security formula based